

54 *THE CASTAWAYS OF
THE FLAG*

The direction they had to take was northward, until the wind should clear the horizon.

They hoped that this might happen as soon as the breeze had got so far. So all eyes were fixed in that direction. If the land showed only for one moment, John Block would ask no more, but would steer for it.

But no rift appeared in the veil, although the wind seemed to acquire force as the sun went down. The boat was moving fairly fast. Fritz and the boatswain were beginning to wonder if they had passed the land*

Doubt crept into their hearts again.

Had Frank

been mistaken, after all ? Had he

really caught

sight of land to the northward f

He declared again most positively that he had.

" It was a high coast/' he declared

again, " a cliff

with an almost horizontal crest, and it was impos-

sible to mistake a cloud for it,"

" Yet, since we are bearing down upon it," Fritz

replied, " we ought to have reached it by now.

It could not have been more than twelve or fifteen

miles off then."

" Are you sure, Block," Frank went on, " that

you have been steering the boat on to it all the time,

and that h was due north ? "

" It is possible that we have got on a
wrong
tack," the boatswain acknowledged,
"And so I
think it would be better to wait until
the horizon